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CIA ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH UNIVERSITIES

BY JANE SEAGRAVE

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FILE ONLY

Some Harvard professors were surprised this month to learn that a colleague had accepted CIA money for a conference on Islam and politics, but officials at universities and at the spy agency say the CIA has been openly courting scholars for years.

"About 10 years ago, we were mandated by Congress to go out into academia and get third opinions _ to maintain the vitality of our analysis, so that the CIA does not become myopic in its research," said Central Intelligence Agency spokeswoman Patti Volz. "And, sure, we've been very, very active in doing this."

The agency's budget remains a secret, and Ms. Volz declined to say how much it spends each year or who receives the money. But several universities said they have received funds for research on subjects ranging from nuclear proliferation to the Philippines to computer software.

University administrators contacted by The Associated Press said they see nothing wrong with professors performing work for the CIA provided schools are told in advance and the research isn't classified.

"We don't have bans against any agency so long as they don't infringe on the right to publish in the open literature," said Robert M. Bock, dean of the graduate school at the University of Wisconsin.

But the Oct. 10 disclosure that Harvard professor Nadav Safran, director of the school's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, had accepted about \$150,000 from the CIA aroused several of his colleagues. The money included \$45,700 for a two-day conference on Islam and politics held last week at the school.

Seven faculty members associated with the center this week asked the university to prohibit the center from taking any money from the CIA. They argued that CIA funding is inappropriate in sensitive areas of study such as the Middle East, where scholars must be free of what could be perceived as special ties to the U.S. government.

Connections between the CIA and the center "may result in reduced access to research sources, a suspicious or even hostile attitude on the part of foreign governments, academic institutions and individuals, and even the possibility of physical harm," they said in a letter to A. Michael Spence, Harvard's dean of faculty.

Most universities have written policies that lay out the conditions under which professors may accept funds from any external source. Many require faculty to get permission from a department chairman, dean or a special committee, who review the grant to make sure it doesn't restrict professors from publishing their research.

Spence has said Safran's error was in failing to notify the administration in advance about the source of the money as required by Harvard guidelines, and university officials say they are continuing to investigate the matter. Safran said he did not report the source of the money because he received it as an individual, not in his role as the center's director.

The CIA's financial stake in universities has grown noticeably in recent years, says John Shattuck, vice president for governmental and public affairs at Harvard.

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"There is certainly not less money flowing in," he said in an interview with The Boston Globe. "I think the CIA has been trying to find an academic home all over the place, and the trend has certainly been toward further involvement."

But officials at several prominent universities said that while they have no explicit prohibition against taking money from the CIA, they have accepted few, if any, grants from the agency.

Yale University spokesman Walter Littell said the school has not accepted any CIA money for at least a decade, although Yale's guidelines wouldn't rule it out. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology currently has no CIA contracts, although Provost John M. Deutsch said individual faculty members probably act as consultants to the agency.

At the University of Michigan, James Lesch, director of research administration and development, said \$50,000 of the \$160 million accepted last year in sponsored research money came from the CIA.

"We treat them as any other sponsors, but we will not accept something that cannot be published or has undue delay in being published," he said.

Aside from Safran's contracts, Shattuck said Harvard now has only one CIA grant for sponsored research: a \$7,500 contract that gives the CIA a subscription to a series of publications about computer technology and information management.

But administrators acknowledge there are loopholes in school guidelines that could permit faculty members to accept CIA money without the university's knowledge. And they note the possibility that grants from other governmental sources could be coming indirectly from the CIA.

"Although we've never uncovered anything like that, there's a possibility that one doesn't know when one is accepting CIA money," said Michigan spokesman Wono Lee.